



YouthPartnership

QUESTIONNAIRE

“PARTICIPATION”

BELGIUM-FLANDERS



YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission



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1 Structures of Participation at the local, regional or national level

1.1 Youth parliaments

1.1.1 Local youth parliaments

Local children's and youth councils do exist in some local authorities and a large number of parties include such a council as an objective in their programme or in their policy when they come to power. However, local authorities are not obliged to set up a local children's or youth council. The composition, organisation and remit may differ from one municipality to another.

1.1.2 Regional youth parliaments

The provinces of Antwerp and Limburg had a provincial children's council until a few years ago. In the meantime they have been abolished and replaced by other structures and systems focusing on promoting children's participation in governance. In East Flanders, the Parti-tur project (Participation in turbo language) was launched in 2002 aiming to support local government initiatives which facilitate children's and youth participation. In this framework, a provincial youth council was set up in 2005.

1.1.3 National youth parliament

The Flemish Children's Parliament is an initiative of the European Children's Rights Foundation, abbreviated as Child!. Its mission is to be the voice of all Flemish children. This parliament comprises 40 members (children in the 5th and 6th forms) and 9 ministers.

1.2 Youth councils

1.2.1 Local youth councils

Each local authority (including Brussels Capital) has a local youth council (an obligation under the Flemish Parliament Act of 14 February 2003, as modified by the Flemish Parliament Act of 23 December 2005). Representatives of local or intermunicipal youth work initiatives sit on this council, but also young people who are not members of youth organisations may participate in the council's activities. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen is obliged to seek the youth council's advice on youth policy issues. Moreover, the local youth council may offer advice at its own initiative on issues affecting youth or youth work. In 2001 there were 282 youth councils in Flanders.

1.2.2 Regional Youth Councils

There are 5 provincial youth councils (West Flanders, East Flanders, Antwerp, Limburg, Flemish Brabant). The Flemish Parliament Act of 14 February 2003, as modified by the Act of 23 December

2005, also governs the recognition and establishment of provincial youth councils. They have the same advisory powers as local youth councils but exercise them at the provincial level.

1.2.3 National youth council

Flanders also has a youth council at Flemish level: Vlaamse Jeugdraad, Arenbergstraat 1D, 1000 Brussel - 02/551.13.80 - info@vlaamsejeugdraad.be

The key task of the Flemish Youth Council is to help ensure that the voice and views of children, young people, youth organisations and youth advisory bodies (youth councils and pupil councils) are effectively heard and integrated into policy-making. The Flemish Youth Council may, at its own discretion or at the request of the Flemish Government or of the Flemish Parliament, give advice on all youth related issues. In addition the Flemish Youth Council may counsel federal authorities and other bodies at its own initiative. The General Assembly of the Youth Council comprises 24 members: 10 young people, 12 individuals actively involved in recognised youth work organisations, 1 young person representing the Organisation of Flemish Pupils and 1 young person nominated by the Association of Flemish Students. In 2002, the Flemish Youth Council was established by a Flemish Parliament Act. In the past, the Flemish Youth Council comprised a Youth Policy Commission that tackled all the themes. Since 1 September 2006, this commission is no longer active, and all cases are treated as specific pathways. To this end, specific working groups are set up. (Web site www.vlaamsejeugdraad.be)

1.3 Others structures of Participation

There are many other participation structures in which children and young people may be represented directly or indirectly, especially at local level.

At Flemish level, the Pupil Parliament may be mentioned. The Pupil Parliament operates in the twilight zone between education and youth work: meetings are held in leisure time, but recruitment is done by enthusiastic teachers at school. Usually, pupils of different schools from one or more municipalities sit together in the same parliament (www.scholierenparlement.be). There are some twenty Pupil Parliaments, some 900 members of parliament and 150 coaches. Pupils of the third stage of secondary education (17- to 18-year-olds) may participate. In fact, it is a large role playing exercise tackling worldwide topics (e.g. democracy, employment, media?). "Culture and religion" is the key theme of the 2006-2007 school year. Over a one year time span, various sessions take place in all Flemish provinces, after which young people can discuss their positions with experts and politicians during a joint closing session. After the closing session, Globelink - the organisation monitoring the pupil parliament - ensures that the positions taken by young people are followed up at policy level.

2 Percentage of Young people who are members of

2.1 Percentage of Young people in global population n(100%)who are members of a political party

N/I %

2.1.1 Percentage of Young people in global population who are members of a political party (by age groups)

13-15	N/I %
16-18	N/I %
19-21	N/I %
22-24	N/I %
25-27	N/I %
28-30	N/I %

2.1.2 Percentage of Young people in global population who are members of a political party (by gender)

female	N/I %
male	N/I %

2.1.3 Percentage of Young people who are members of a political party in global population by rural-urban

Rural	N/I %
Urban	N/I %

2.2 Percentage of Young people who are members of a trade union from the ages of 13 and 30 in global population

N/I %

2.2.1 Percentage of Young people who are members of a trade union in global population by age groups

13-15	N/I %
16-18	N/I %
19-21	N/I %

22-24	N/I %
25-27	N/I %
28-30	N/I %

2.2.2 Percentage of Young people in global population who are members of a trade union (by gender)

female	N/I %
male	N/I %

2.2.3 Percentage of Young people who are members of a trade union in global population by rural-urban.

Rural	N/I %
Urban	N/I %

2.3 Percentage of Young people who are members of a youth organisation from the ages of 13 and 30 in global population

N/I %

2.3.1 Percentage of Young people who are members of a youth organisation in global population by age group

13-15	N/I %
16-18	N/I %
19-21	N/I %
22-24	N/I %
25-27	N/I %
28-30	N/I %

2.3.2 Percentage of Young people who are members of a youth organisation in global population by gender

female	N/I %
male	N/I %

2.3.3 Percentage of Young people who are members of a youth organisation in global population (by rural-urban)

Rural	N/I %
Urban	N/I %

2.3.4 What type of youth organisations are people involved in

In Flanders, many youth organisations are active: youth movements and youth associations, political youth organisations, playwork services during school holidays, youth centres and clubs, youth groups focusing on amateur arts practice, youth workshops, youth music workshops. However, we do not have records of the number of members or participants in youth work. Indeed, it should be noted that we only have limited information on certain age groups. Young people between 14 and 25 join sports associations, youth associations, local youth work initiatives, cultural associations, youth centres, hobby clubs, social associations and participate in the organisation of parties for young people, neighbourhood parties, festivals. 63% is an active member of the above mentioned organisations (JOP,2005).

3 Existing actions/support, of national or regional scope, to promote the Participation of Young people in local life and follow-up mechanisms

By supporting the CJP (Cultural Youth Passport), the Flemish government tries to further encourage young people to engage in cultural participation. CJP is a non-profit organisation and wants to bring young people and culture closer together and in this way promote the participation of young people in culture. CJP was commissioned by the Youth and Sports Division of the Ministry of the Flemish Community to disseminate information, launch projects and lower financial thresholds by issuing a discount voucher (www.cjp.be).

The Student Card is an initiative of the Ministry of the Flemish Community in education and is linked to CJP. In 2004, $\frac{3}{4}$ of schools participated.

3.1 Legal actions to support the structures for Participation of Young people in local life

The 14 February 2003 Flemish Parliament Act on supporting and stimulating the municipal, intermunicipal and provincial youth policy and youth work policy as modified by the 23 December 2005 Flemish Parliament Act requires that each local authority recognise or establish one or more youth councils. One of the tasks of the youth council (possibly in co-operation with the local youth services, the youth counsellor, youth work, local government) consists of designing a three-year youth (work) policy plan. Key topics are: youth work support programmes, volunteer training, greater access to youth work, participation, infrastructure, integrated youth policy, space for youth, communication and

information. We can consider it as a form of support to youth participation.

In addition, there are funding opportunities for specific participation projects and associations as defined in the Flemish Parliament Act on Flemish Youth Policy (29 March 2002). In 2004, the Flemish Parliament Act on Pupil Participation came into effect. The Act formally provides for participation at school. In order to embed pupil participation in school life, an effective promotion policy is necessary (www.kinderrechtencoalitie.be). For schools with a pupil council training events are organised (by VSK, Steunpunt Leerlingenparticipatie, JEMP,...) 50% of schools take part in this once a year. From 11 June 2004 onwards, KER (child impact assessment report, Act of 15 July 1997) is to be used as prescribed by Ministerial Order. The intention is to test draft Flemish Parliament Acts ('insofar as it is evident that the proposed decision directly affects the interest of the child') against their effects on the rights and living conditions of children and young people ('each person under the age of 18). In the meantime, the KER has been extended to become a JOKER (impact assessment report on children and young people, including -25-year-olds).

3.2 Financial actions to support the various structures for youth political and NGO Participation

In both Acts as described in question 3.1., funding conditions are set out. The budget for youth amounts to 50 259,00 euro for 2006. In 2005 the basic grant is 51 595,46 euro set out by the Flemish Parliament Act on the funding of nationally organised youth work.

The 'Vlaamse Scholierenkoepel' (VSK - Organisation of Flemish Pupils) receives grants from the Flemish Community. In 2005 those grants amounted to 302 000 euro. Grants awarded to participation and communication projects amounted to 1 652 000 euro in 2005. The financial support of youth councils in Flanders totalled 513 000 euro in 2005. The grants allocated by the Flemish Community to local authorities in order to finance youth work initiatives for socially disadvantaged young people came to 3 006 700 euro in 2005.

3.3 Other initiatives planned in the short term

N/A

4 Do some of the existing or planned actions aim at certain specific groups of Young people



yes



no

If yes, what groups?

The primary goal of (Youth) Policy is to promote an integrated approach and inclusiveness.

Nevertheless, some specific target groups get particular attention: immigrants, gays, lesbians and bisexuals, disabled young people, low-skilled young people. They are described as young people who are at risk of dropping out of education, becoming victims and/or losing touch with society as a result of their physical, mental, sensorial or social problems. Supplementary support is provided for them. In order to meet the needs of all these young people, policy makers try to adopt a policy that focuses attention on youth participation and the large diversity of this target group of 'young people'. Funded actions for target groups are the following for 2001-2004: deprived youngsters, disabled young people and movements of immigrant youth. The "Steunpunt Allochtone Meisjes en Vrouwen" (SAMV - Support Structure for Immigrant Girls and Women) and the "Platform Allochtoon Jeugdwerk" (PAJ - Immigrant Youth Work Platform) both have received structural support from 2005 onwards.

5 The vote

5.1 Obligatory?



yes



no

5.2 Age of the right to vote

From 18 years old

5.3 The right to vote

In order to be entitled to vote, citizens are required:

1. to have the Belgian nationality;
2. to have attained the full age of eighteen years;
3. to be registered in the population register of a Belgian municipality or in the population registers that are kept in diplomatic or consular service posts;
4. not to be permanently or temporarily denied the right to vote as provided by this Code

For local elections, the nationality requirement is to be a Belgian citizen or national of a Member State of the European Union.

5.4 Age of eligibility to be a candidate

From 18 years old

5.5 Eligibility to be a candidate

The requirements for being entitled to vote or to stand as a candidate are the same:

1. to have the Belgian nationality;
2. to have attained the full age of eighteen years;
3. to be registered in the population register of a Belgian municipality or in the population registers that are kept in diplomatic or consular service posts;
4. not to be permanently or temporarily denied the right to vote as provided by this Code

6 The elections

6.1 Number of Young people voting between the ages of 18 (or the age of the right to vote) and 30

947.542 persons

6.2 Number of Young people between the ages of 18 (or the age of the right to vote) and 30 registered on the lists of voters

947.542 persons

6.3 Indicators of Participation related to European polls

6.3.1 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote who are registered from the ages of 13 to 30.

100 %

6.3.2 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by age groups

18-21	29,3%
22-25	31,6%
26-30	39,1%

6.3.3 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by gender

Female	49,4%
Male	50,6%

6.3.4 In European elections, the percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by rural-urban

Rural	N/A %
Urban	N/A %

6.3.5 In European elections, the percentage of Young people s Participation in relation to the total population to vote

19.5 %

6.4 National indicators of Participation in the polls

6.4.1 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered

100 %

6.4.2 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by age groups

18-21	29,3%
22-25	31,6%
26-30	39,1%

6.4.3 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by gender

Female	49,4%
Male	50,6%

6.4.4 National elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by rural-urban

Rural	N/A %
Urban	N/A %

6.4.5 National elections, Young people as a percentage of Participation in the total population to vote

19.5 %

6.5 Regional and local indicators of Participation in the polls

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6.5.1 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered

100 %

6.5.2 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by age groups

18-21	29,3%
22-25	31,6%
26-30	39,1%

6.5.3 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by gender

Female	49,4%
Male	50,6%

6.5.4 Regional and local elections, percentage of young voters in relation to the number of Young people in age to vote registered, by rural-urban

Rural	N/A %
Urban	N/A %

6.5.5 In regional and local elections the percentage of Young people Participation in relation to the total population to vote

19.5 %

6.6 Number of Young people (under the age of 30) who are member of the national parliament.

5 persons

6.6.1 Number of Young people elected (under the age of 30) at the national level, by gender

Female	0
Male	5

6.7 Enter the number of Young people (under the age of 30) who are member of regional parliaments or are hold the position of a regional minister.

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29 persons

6.7.1 Number of Young people elected (under the age of 30) at the regional, level by gender

Female	11
Male	18

6.8 Number of Young people elected (under the age of 30) at the local level

824 persons

6.8.1 Number of Young people elected (under the age of 30) at the local level, by gender

Female	384
Male	440

7 Existing actions/support, of national or regional scope, to promote the Participation in the system of representative democracy and follow-up mechanisms

In general, every political party has a youth wing. These youth wings strongly resemble regular youth movements but they devote special attention to the participation of young people in the political landscape.

Examples are:

Animo (jongerenwerking van SP.A- youth wing of the socialist party) www.animoweb.be,

Jong VLD www.jongvld.be,

Spirit www.jongspirit.be

Jong Groen! www.jonggroen.be

Jong CD&V www.jong-cdenv.be

Vlaams Belang Jongeren www.vbj.org

7.1 Actions that have been undertaken this year

N/A

7.2 Other initiatives planned in the short term

N/A

8 Do some of the existing or planned actions aim at specific groups of Young people

☒ yes

☐ no

Specific target groups of Young people aimed at by existing or planned actions

N/A : see answer: 9.3

9 Learning to participate

9.1 Existing actions within the systems of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate

The 'Oprechte deelneming' (Sincere participation) file on pupil participation in primary education was developed and disseminated in Spring 2004 by the 'Steunpunt Leerlingenparticipatie' (Support Structure for Pupil Participation) and the 'Kinderrechtencommissariaat' (Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner). (www.digiclb.be/nieuws/steunpuntllnparticipatie.htm)

Through the 'ToeTerToe' project, the Vlaamse Scholierenkoepel (VSK - Organisation of Flemish Pupils) sets up discussion panels and offers pupils the opportunity to give their opinion on current education topics. They are translated into concrete proposals and points of interest taking the pupils' views into consideration and are sent to policy makers. (web site www.vsknet.be/leerlingen-over-onderwijs/project-toetertoe.php)

9.1.1 Mechanisms of Participation at school

The 2 April 2004 Act on participation at school and the Flemish Education Council sets out two forms of participation: a pupil council and a school council. Schools are required to establish a pupil council unless school regulations already provide for some form of pupil participation or unless less than 10% of the pupils ask for such a council. The pupil council is elected and can give advice and ask for/give information on various topics.

The school council is composed of parents, teachers, pupils and local representatives of social, economic and cultural environments. The school council offers advice, asks for/gives information and consults with the school board. It appeared from research into the existence and working of pupil councils in secondary education, that 89% of the schools (which also organise a third stage) have a pupil council (VSK 2002). A survey of VSK shows that in community education 17% of pupil councils are represented in the school council, in privately run education 9% are represented in the participation council. There are some 900 pupil councils. The 'Vlaamse Scholierenkoepel' defined a

number of criteria which are to determine whether a pupil council has a "minimum set of tasks and responsibilities". A number of important issues on which pupil councils could give advice are meals, the school regulations, homework, timetables, evaluation mode and pupil guidance. (VSK 2002)

9.1.2 Learning of citizenship

Since 1997, citizenship education has been included in the attainments targets and developmental objectives of secondary education. Goals are set for the first (12- to 14-year-olds), second (14- to 16-year-olds) and third stages (16- to 18-year-olds). In the first stage, focus is on class and school level, family forms and personal living environment, media and democratic forms of governance. Goals for the second stage are directed towards human rights education, active citizenship and decision making. In the third stage, emphasis is placed on democratic councils and parliaments, social services and world citizenship.

9.1.3 Other actions within the systems of formal education aiming at developing and deepening learning to participate

Apart from an elected pupil council, a wide range of different types of participation can be identified in schools: a pupil council with volunteers, working groups, sounding board groups, open forums, theme groups, suggestion boxes, school radios?. Here, the school's own initiatives (launched by pupils, teachers, school management teams) are referred to as these initiatives are not legally defined. The Organisation of Flemish Pupils (VSK) supports pupil councils, among other things by giving training. "Learning by doing" (learning to participate = participating) is at the centre of these initiatives. From 1 September 2004 onwards, all Flemish pupils in secondary education may obtain a special 'student card'. Over-16's join CJP free of charge.

9.2 Fields of actions and/or support – (national or regional scope, outside the formal education context) which aim at promoting learning to participate amongst young people

Involvement and participation of young people in policy making is a key theme of Flemish youth policy. Youth work is expected to contribute significantly to child and youth participation or to teaching them to participate. In addition, associations and projects aiming at the participation or the development of participatory practises of children and young people are recognised and funded. As a key condition of recognition, projects and associations must focus on involvement and participation of young people in the decision-making process.

9.2.1 Nature of this support

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The 29 March 2002 Flemish Parliament Act on Flemish Youth Policy laid down the support of projects and associations encouraging the involvement and participation of young people in policy-making processes. Moreover, this Act also sets forth the conditions which must be complied with by projects and associations in order to be eligible for funding.

9.2.2 Concerned sector of activities: company, associations and NGOs, training bodies, municipalities, medias

Mainly, projects and associations within youth work are involved but also the community building sector is active in this field. Moreover, initiatives aiming at youth participation are also launched in other fields (education, welfare work, labour market,...) The education and sports sector work together. However, only 32.7% of sports clubs co-operate with schools. Nevertheless, co-operation in these fields could provide an excellent opportunity to promote further participation (VRIND 2003). Awareness-raising campaigns are set up at local level (e.g. by local sports councils). Flemish campaigns such as "Als het kriebelt moet je sporten" are organised by Bloso. In addition, there is the Youth sports contract involving 237 municipalities which encompassed 1,209 youth sports projects in 2002. www.vsknet.be/leerlingen-over-onderwijs/project-toetertoe.php)

We refer to partnerships with Canon and Unizo and programmes such as Kleur Bekennen and Mos. 'Kleur Bekennen' is an educational programme focussing on the promotion and support of global education and active global citizenship in schools. 'Mos' is an initiative of the Environment, Nature and Energy Department, is short for "environmental performance at school" and focuses on all schools from nursery to higher education.

Vlajo (vzw Vlaamse Jonge Ondernemingen, in English: Flemish Young Enterprises) promotes 'mini-enterprises' and Canon (Cultural Unit of the Education Department of the Ministry of the Flemish Community) reinforces interaction between education and culture. Canon supports creative cultural projects in schools.

Companies establish electoral colleges for young people under 25 years old.

The 'Kinderrechtencommissariaat' (Office of the Children's Rights Commissioner) launched a campaign to make participation in the family debatable (the "Kom je dat thuis eens vertellen?" campaign) In Petto developed H²O (Handleiding voor Houders van Ouders, i.e. Guidelines for Parents) and Contactdoos (party game) The aim is to make young people think about their relation with their parents and the way in which they make their voice heard and participate in the family.

9.2.3 Among these actions (question 9.2.1 and 9.2.2), actions that have been undertaken this year

Each year, various associations receive Flemish Government funding. An example of such an association is the Kinderrechtenhuis (Children's rights home), which IVRK wants to promote among young people in youth work and other settings. Participation, empowerment, resilience and creatively involving young people in society are the crucial points of action. Annually, a number of projects in the context of "participation and communication" are also eligible for funding. Examples of such projects are available on the following web site : www.jeugdbeleid.be This web site gives information on the content and the amount of funding of the project.

9.2.4 Other initiatives planned in the short term

New applications for funding or continuation of funding can be annually submitted.

9.3 Are there specific target groups of Young people aimed at by existing or planned actions?



yes



no

The specific target groups

The primary goal of (Youth) Policy is to promote an integrated approach and inclusiveness.

Nevertheless, some specific target groups get particular attention: immigrants, gays, lesbians and bisexuals, disabled young people, drop-outs, young people in care, low-skilled young people ? . A specific example is the project ?Erbij. Participatie van studenten met functiebeperkingen? (A real sense of belonging. Participation of young people with special needs?). This project is aimed at disabled young people and tries to involve them in student life. This participation is promoted at the level of the board as well as in the field of social and cultural activities.

www.jeugdbeleid.be Funded actions for target groups are the following for 2001-2004: deprived youngsters, disabled young people and movements of immigrant youth.